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GENERAL NOTES.

The French Geographical Society proposes to establish an observatory in North Africa, and M. JARRY DESLOGES has been entrusted with the selection of a site.

Dr. OSTEN BERGSTRAND has been appointed Professor of Astronomy and Director of the Observatory at Upsala.

M. FAYET, of the Paris Observatory, has been appointed Astronomer at the Nice Observatory in succession to M. SIMONIN.

A church spire has recently been saved from destruction in a very odd way. The Astronomer ROYAL was testing a telescope at observatory in Greenwich Park, and chose the spire of St. John's Church, Blackheath, a mile away, as a fixed object on which to focus the instrument. He was astonished to see a serious flaw in the stone work of the spire,—there was a gaping fissure through which daylight appeared. The rector was informed, steeple-jacks went up, and the crack was found to be about fourteen feet in length. The church is closed and repairs are going on.—*Observatory*, Oct., 1911.

The Imperial Academy of Japan has awarded a medal and testimonial to Dr. KIMURA for the discovery of the term in the latitude variation which is now ordinarily known as the Kimura-term. This term is annual in period, is independent of the longitude of the observing station, and corresponds to a shift of the center of inertia of the Earth of between four and five feet either way from its mean position. It is annual in period, and no satisfactory explanation of its cause has yet been given. One hypothesis which has been advanced endeavors to explain it as a meteorological effect due to the increase of the layer of ice and snow at one pole, accompanied by the corresponding and simultaneous diminution of this layer at the opposite pole. But the maximum period in the Kimura-term does not come at the proper epoch to make this hypothesis an acceptable one.

A project is being earnestly supported for the establishment of a well-equipped solar observatory in Australia. The need of such a station in the southern hemisphere to fill the gap occasioned by the northern winter has long been felt, and Australia's position in longitude would make such a station particularly serviceable in filling the lacuna that at present exists between observatories of the eastern and western hemispheres. A site has been suggested at Yass-Canberra, and Professor P. BARRACCHI, the Government Astronomer at Victoria, who has been presented with a nine-inch telescope by GRUBB for the purpose, has been commissioned by the Federal Government to erect this instrument on the proposed site at Yass-Canberra, to test the atmospheric conditions on the mountain and its suitability for solar observations. He and his assistant, Mr. BALDWIN, will take turns during the coming year in making these preliminary visual and spectroscopic observations. In this connection Father CORTIE has indicated his preference for the mountain Canoblas, which he has visited and which was also selected as an unusually favorable site by Professor HUSSEY in his expedition of reconnaissance several years ago. This mountain is 4600 feet in altitude and possesses many advantages for such a station.